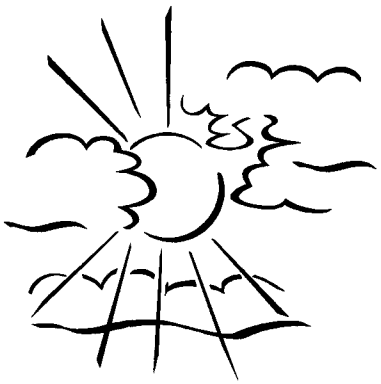
Department of Human Services

Prepared by the DHS Office of Communications (517) 373-7394



*Important story at this spot

Articles in Today's Clips
Monday, June 5, 2006

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

Ricky's abuse reported as early as '02
Agency workers did not look into complaints filed three years before 7-year-old boy was found dead.

Monday, June 05, 2006

Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

More than three years before his murder, Ricky Holland was the subject of a complaint filed with a state agency that said the child had rope burns on his wrists and that he was tied to his bed every night.

But workers from Child Protective Services decided not to pursue the February 2002 complaint, according to a petition submitted to Ingham County Circuit Judge Janelle Lawless and obtained by The Detroit News.

The state Department of Human Services, of which Child Protective Services is a part, has consistently declined comment on the issue.

The source of the complaint was not identified in the court documents.

Ricky Holland, 7, disappeared in July 2005. In January of this year, his father, Tim Holland, led authorities to Ricky's body, which had been dumped in rural Ingham County.

Tim Holland and his wife, Lisa, are in Ingham County jail awaiting trial on murder charges.

Multiple complaints to state workers about Ricky's treatment were listed in the petition submitted to Lawless on May 4. The state petitioned the court to terminate the parental rights of Tim and Lisa Holland, Ricky's adoptive parents.

Lawless will rule on the petition and determine who will get custody of their four remaining children, in a family court trial on Oct. 30. The Hollands also adopted three of Ricky's siblings -- Joseph, 4; Kathryn, 3; and Sam, 2. The youngest, Alison, 2, is the couple's biological child.

All four children are staying with Tim Holland's relatives.

According to the petition, Child Protective Services workers observed signs of physical abuse on Joseph, Alison and Sam during visits to the Hollands' Williamston home following Ricky's disappearance last July, but didn't remove those children from the home.

The petition noted that neighbors in Williamston said they had seen all of the Holland children being walked on leashes after Ricky's disappearance. Lisa Holland frequently walked Ricky on a leash, according to court testimony.

According to the court documents, on Oct. 31, 2005, a protective services worker noted bruises on Joseph's cheekbone near his eye and on his thigh, and three small horizontal marks that were red and scabbed.

A doctor reviewed photos of the injuries and determined that they could have been caused by a fall, a spanking or fingernail scratches.

On Dec. 8, the worker again noticed bruises on Joseph, this time on his back, as well as scratches on his chest and thigh and faint marks on his ankles and lower legs.

When asked about the injuries, Joseph said "Momma did it," according to the petition, and demonstrated by hitting a doll with an object and saying, "Just like that."

On Jan. 25, two days before Tim Holland led detectives to Ricky's body, the worker again visited the home and saw scratches on the back of Joseph's neck, the documents said. "Mommy did it ... home ... sit in chair," he told the worker, according to the court papers.

State workers had Ricky's siblings examined by a doctor on Jan. 30, three days after their parents were arrested in connection with Ricky's death, and the doctor found more bumps and scratches.

Mike Nichols, the Lansing attorney for Lisa Holland, said his client has been "accused of a lot of things" but that the accusations have not been proven against her.

"These are allegations, and nothing has been proven," Nichols said.

"There have been several criminal and quasi-criminal charges brought against her but nothing has been proven and (the charges) were subsequently dismissed."

The attorney for Tim Holland did not return calls.

The case has drawn national attention from critics of federal and state policies that favor quick adoptions over efforts to help birth parents hang on to their children.

You can reach Karen Bouffard at (734) 462-2206 or ***kbouffard@detnews.com***.

State Received Abuse Allegation Before Child's Slaying

Adoptive Parents Face Murder Charges

POSTED: 9:57 am EDT June 5, 2006

DETROIT -- State child abuse workers determined more than three years before Ricky Holland's death that he had rope burns on his wrists, but didn't investigate further. Ricky's adoptive parents, Tim and Lisa Holland, face trial this summer on charges of killing the boy after abusing him for years.

The state is also attempting to take away the Hollands' parental rights to their four surviving children.

Court documents filed in the custody case show a Child Protective Services worker in Jackson County investigated the Hollands in February 2002. But no further action was taken because Ricky suffered no serious injury and the then-4-year-old made no clear statement of abuse.

Published June 5, 2006

Man accused of trying to lure girl, 12

By Susan Vela and Jennifer Marckini
Lansing State Journal

VEVAY TWP. - A 48-year-old Mason man accused of attempting to lure away a 12-year-old girl was arrested Sunday near the Church of Christ, right before the 11 a.m. worship service.

Ingham County sheriff's Sgt. Tim O'Neill said the man has several disorderly conduct convictions in Ingham County.

"He's been a problem in the area for some time," O'Neill said. "But we got him finally for this."

O'Neill said the man, facing a charge of enticing a minor, would be arraigned today in 55th District Court.

Sgt. Danielle Patrick said enticing a minor is a felony charge. She said the man isn't a registered sex offender and his record doesn't show anything more serious than disorderly conduct, to her knowledge.

"I don't think he touched her in any way, but he was clearly trying to entice her," Patrick said.

Patrick could not release what the man said to the girl or if it was of a sexual nature. She said the girl wasn't harmed.

Church minister Ron Brown said the man arrested was wearing a Hooters shirt when he apparently was dropped off near the church, walked inside and asked the girl to go away with him.

According to Brown, the man approached the girl in or near the foyer, with about 20 people milling around.

The church, at 821 N. Cedar St. in Mason, is a small one-story building with few secluded areas. "That's

why it was so brazen," the minister said. However, "I was a little bit suspicious because of his attire." The girl rejected the man's advance, and he left the church. O'Neill said the man never used threats or force. The girl told her aunt what had happened and the minister was alerted.

Brown, who had never seen the man before, called 911. Deputies arrested the man as he walked away from the church on Howell Road.

About 57 people attended the Church of Christ's 11 a.m. worship service. Because of what transpired Sunday, church officials are considering stationing a person in the fellowship area who would look for Signs of trouble.

"We're going to be much more diligent," Brown said. "This is never going to happen again."

Contact Susan Vela at 702-4248 or svela@lsj.com; or Jennifer Marckini at 267-1301 o jmarckini@lsj.com.

Mom: Man Attempted To Abduct Son From Driveway

Police Release Sketch Of Culprit

POSTED: 7:33 am EDT June 5, 2006

Police released a sketch of a man wanted in an attempted abduction in Canton over the weekend.

A mother reported to police at about noon on Saturday that somebody tried to take her 1 1/2-year-old son from her home in the 800 block of Mystic Court, police said. The mother was having a garage sale and her son was playing in the driveway. A man came up to the son, picked him up and began to walk away with him, police said.

"He took my son's hand, and started walking down the driveway with him, and saying how he's gonna take him home," said Carrie Russell, the boy's mother. "He got about to the end of the driveway and then he picked him up and started walking down the sidewalk with him."

The mother went after the man and took her son back. Before the man walked away, he told the mother, "He's cute, I'll be back," according to police.

About five minutes later, the man returned and started walking toward the garage. The mother then grabbed her son, and the man then walked away, got into a vehicle and left the scene, police said.

The man was described as white, dark-skinned, between the ages of 40 and 50, 5 feet 4 inches tall, 225 pounds, with a stocky build, police said. He was wearing a white shirt, blue shorts, sandals and a gold necklace with a small charm. His vehicle was described as a white sedan.

Police said the man may have a mental condition, Local 4 reported.

Anyone with information on the man should contact Canton police.

Lost
State trying to crack down on runaways from foster homes

GENESEE COUNTY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION
Sunday, June 04, 2006

By Ron Fonger
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Genesee County - When adult filmmakers were looking for the perfect new girl next door in 2004, they had no trouble spotting Stephanie Draheim, a freckle-faced 18-year-old from Flint.

But finding the same runaway foster child turned into a frustrating game of cat and mouse for the state Department of Human Services and an end result that state Supreme Court Justice Maura Corrigan told The Flint Journal is "very disturbing."

For 20 months, Draheim flew under the state's radar, running away at age 15 and ending up in Florida, more than 1,000 miles from the social workers who were charged with looking out for her.

By the time she was discharged from Michigan's foster care system in 2004, Draheim was headed to X-rated stardom, performing in 13 different pornographic films that year. Some may have been filmed while she was still an 18-year-old ward of the state, a Journal review of court files and other documents shows.

"Whenever I see a story like Stephanie Draheim's, it's like somehow we all failed her," said Karen Bunker, an attorney whose Child Advocate Team briefly represented her in Genesee County Family Court.

Corrigan called Draheim's case an example of what can happen to foster children who run from the system set up to protect them from abuse and neglect. Too often, she said, they find trouble - even death - as they look for a place to stay and money to survive on their own.

Draheim was one of 15 children from Genesee County and 230 from Michigan were missing from foster care when Corrigan, as chief justice, ordered local family judges throughout the state to step up efforts to find and keep track of runaways in late 2002.

Today, even more - 19 - are missing from the county, and the state's numbers are steady. Some, like Draheim, have been on the run for more than a year.

Corrigan said foster children who run away in Michigan today are more likely to be found than they were three years ago. She doesn't fault the judges or the system in the Draheim case, but things aren't perfect.

With more social workers and money, the state could have checked on Draheim face to face after she ran across state lines, rather than relying on help from Florida social workers.

"We're doing better, ... but we can do better every day," Corrigan said. "This is a work in progress."

No new leads

Special monthly hearings begun three years ago after the Supreme Court edicts require state caseworkers to report progress in attempting to find runaways. But there was little hopeful news at hearings in May, presided over by Genesee County Family Court referee Peggy Odette:

- Nicole Bovee, 17, has run away before - probably four times, a caseworker said. This time, she has been missing since mid-March. No new leads.
- A caseworker is looking for two sisters, Ashley and Natasha Sawyers, 14 and 16. Their mother has never attended any of the monthly hearings since the sisters turned up missing - Natasha in August and Ashley in January. No new leads.
- During the hearing for 17-year-old Henry Marshall - missing since September - an attorney appointed by the court to represent him tells Odette, "He's figured out ways to make sure he's not found."
- Kristina Pringle, 17, who walked away from court after a judge decided to place her in foster care in January, still hasn't been found, but her mother told Odette she knows where her daughter has been hiding.
- There could be a new lead that helps find Kaosha Stephens, 16, who has been missing since April 30, 2004. Police found her a few months ago when a house where she was staying was hit in a drug raid, but an information glitch allowed her to walk away.

"These kids are street smart. If they don't want to be found, they are hard to find," Odette said. "Occasionally, they will be located and come back, (but) we can't lock them up forever."

DHS officials will talk only in generalities about missing foster children. They would not discuss how they lost track of Stephanie Draheim, what efforts were made to find her or why she was allowed to stay in Florida once she was found there.

Court files indicate that DHS in Genesee County received a report from Florida almost four months after it made an inquiry in late 2002, indicating Draheim's home there was approved for her to stay in - but her grandparents moved in 2003, and Draheim moved in with a friend.

A top DHS official now says supervision of kids in the system has improved.

"We want to engage them around planning for their future (and) find a placement for them where they will not run," said Mary Mehren, manager of Foster Care and Children's Protective Services for the state.

"The (missing) children are typically 14-17, typically more independent, and when we intervene and remove them (from home), they pretty much have been living on their own (already)," Mehren said. "When you place them in a foster home that is typically more restrictive, ... they rebel against that."

Stephanie's story

The Flint Journal could not reach Draheim despite attempts to contact her through relatives, a former agent, former foster parents and an apartment complex where she has lived in Florida.

DHS records show the state considered Draheim missing from Aug. 10, 2001, when she was just 15, until caseworkers found she had run to Florida.

She had been there before: It was where her mother had taken her when she was a baby - and where her grandmother, Sue Rushton, had rescued her before she turned 2.

Court supervision of Draheim continued until May 2004, and she continued to be a ward of the state until July 12, 2004, the same year adult films featuring her started to be released.

The last reports filed in Family Court by DHS said Draheim was not employed since quitting a job at Domino's Pizza, and noted social workers have had "no face to face contact."

Neither had Bunker, whose Child Advocate Team took over representation of Draheim just months before her case was dismissed.

CAT contracted with the county in an effort to improve representation of children, promising to meet face to face with them - something that hadn't always been done here.

In Draheim's case, Bunker recalled confusion about Draheim's whereabouts and no information on where she was staying.

"You look back and wonder, is there anything you could have done that could have made a difference if you took one extra step?" she said.

This baby needs love'

The call from Draheim's mother was chilling.

In a handwritten letter to Genesee County Family Court, Rushton, formerly of Montrose, said her daughter, Kristen Walton, called her in an "unstable condition in 1988, asking her to come immediately and take Draheim and her older half-sister back home with her.

"I flew the next morning and returned the same day with the understanding I would care for them until she could put her life in order," Rushton's letter said.

Neither her mother nor her biological or legal father did.

One caseworker wrote in a report that Draheim had "no contact whatsoever with her mother. ... No gifts ... no financial support ... no telephone calls."

Rushton, who could not be reached for this story, told the court that her granddaughter needed to know someone would be there for her.

"This baby needs love and stable living conditions," she wrote soon after taking Draheim in.

But Rushton, who had money problems, was later evicted from her own home. By 1996, Stephanie was living with her biological father, Robert Draheim, in a Flint mobile home park.

Court records indicate a caseworker started the process of taking her from her parents and putting her up for adoption after tips that Robert Draheim was leaving his daughter at home alone and driving drunk with Stephanie in his vehicle.

Like most children over age 11 in foster care, Stephanie Draheim was never adopted. She lived in six foster homes and ran away from at least two.

"She was intelligent, but the more intelligent they are, the more trouble they can get into," said Rodger Mead of Burton, one of the last foster parents Draheim stayed with.

She was careful with her possessions, keeping everything she had locked up. Mead suspected Draheim was stealing, too, before deciding to end the foster care arrangement after one month.

"She came here with about eight boxes and tried to walk out with 12," he said. "She was into possessions, and, of course, I can see why."

Cindy Kelzer of Fostoria said she and her husband considered adopting Draheim when they took her into their rural home in the Thumb in parts of 1996 and 1997.

"She was just a very sad little girl, and there was nothing we could do," Kelzer said. "She made it impossible for us to keep her."

Draheim shoplifted from a flea market and a local grocery store before she was a teenager, ran away and "had a lot of verbal abuse for us," Kelzer said, but the family was still attached to her.

They found a therapist to talk to Draheim and brought her on a family trip to Cedar Point even after she had been returned to live in a state institution.

And after Draheim ran away from the Judson Center, she called Kelzer in the middle of night from a gas station on Woodward Avenue in Detroit, asking for help.

Kelzer picked her up and brought her back to Judson, a nonprofit organization that works to place children in foster care.

"She didn't really have anywhere to run to," Kelzer said.

An aunt of Draheim said she thinks Stephanie "just wanted an answer" from her parents: "Why did you leave me?"

"It's very sad," she said. "It's put me in tears many times."

Porn star

It's difficult to say when Draheim's involvement in adult films started, but she's credited as "Allie Sin" in 13 adult movies released in 2004, according to the online film information site Internet Movie Data Base (www.imdb.com).

By January 2005, another Web site operator was selling Draheim's images, using the name "Naughty Nati" on a subscription Web site that continues today, charging customers $24.93 for monthly access.

She's recognized among "famous people from Flint" in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia, along with filmmaker Michael Moore, boxer Chris Byrd and others.

A foster parent and attorney who have known Draheim identified her for The Flint Journal as being "Allie Sin" in photos.

Corrigan's quest

Corrigan said she never realized Michigan's problem with children running away from foster care until the death of Heather Kish, who was killed while missing from foster care in 2002.

The Supreme Court justice helped set up the first special docket for runaway foster children in Wayne County and expanded it to the rest of the state soon after.

Corrigan said there is "very good cooperation with DHS" today and statistics show 75 percent of kids that go missing are eventually found.

"Would I want it to be zero (missing children)? Of course," she said. "I don't know how to get it to zero."

In September, a seminar will showcase the most successful programs from around the state for finding missing children and keeping them from running.

"Stephanie's case is very dramatic, but all these kids (who age out' of foster care) - we know more than half are homeless ... they are having children out of wedlock, they do not complete their education," Corrigan said. She called it a recipe for disaster.

QUICK TAKE

Adrift in foster care

Here's a look at how Flint native Stephanie Draheim went from abandoned child to ward of the state to foster care runaway to adult film star:

- Dec. 26, 1985: Stephanie is born at McLaren Regional Medical Center to Kristen L. Walton and Robert Draheim Jr.
- Nov. 26, 1986: Stephanie's mother sues James D. Walton, Stephanie's legal father, for divorce in Genesee County.
- 1988: Maternal grandmother Sue Rushton of Montrose, who could not be reached for this article, is made Stephanie's legal guardian. In a handwritten letter to Genesee County Family Court, Rushton says she brought Stephanie and her half-sister to her home after their mother called her from Florida "in an

unstable condition." Rushton tells her daughter she will care for the children - "these precious little girls" - until she can put her life in order.

- July 24, 1991: In an annual report to Family Court, Stephanie's grandparents describe her as a polite, thoughtful child. "We're very cramped for space, but we are financially unable to move," they say.
- Nov. 12, 1993: Rushton says in a court filing that Stephanie, 7, is "temporarily with (her biological) father," living in a Flint mobile home park.
- 1995: Stephanie is in the third grade at Carter Elementary School in Montrose. She enjoys Girl Scouts, roller skating and movies, according to court files.
- 1996: Rushton requests termination of her guardianship, saying she is short of cash, facing eviction and can no longer care for her granddaughters.
- May 1996: Stephanie continues to live with Robert Draheim, her biological father, who has no parental rights. Following up on a tip, the Department of Human Services determines Draheim was leaving his daughter at home alone and driving while intoxicated with Stephanie in his

vehicle. She is 10 years old.

- Dec. 5, 1996: A state caseworker says, "There are no relatives to take Stephanie at this point in time" and requests that she be committed to the care and supervision of the state just days before her 11th birthday.
- May 6, 1997: A petition in Genesee County court seeks to terminate the parental rights of Stephanie's legal father, biological father and mother - each because of neglect. The state requests that Stephanie be placed for adoption. The request is later granted.
- May 21, 1998: In an unpublished opinion, the Michigan Court of Appeals upholds the county court decision that terminated Stephanie's mother's parental rights.
- Aug. 10, 2001: Stephanie, 15, runs away from the Flint area foster care home where she is staying after completing the ninth grade.
- Feb. 6, 2002: Judge Thomas Gadola presides over a hearing where Stephanie is determined to still be missing.
- Aug. 7, 2002: A pickup order is issued, and later this same month, a warrant is issued as Stephanie remains missing.
- Dec. 11, 2002: A caseworker says Stephanie

is "living in Florida with her grandparents and attending school." Before the close of the year, the pickup order is canceled after county DHS workers start working with Florida officials about setting up a supervision plan.

- Jan. 22, 2003: Stephanie continues to be listed as absent without legal permission.
- Jan. 31, 2003: The county DHS receives a home study report from Florida's Department of Children and Families, approving Stephanie's grandparents' home as a safe place to stay.
- July 23, 2003: Shortly after her grandparents' home is deemed acceptable, they move to Michigan, and Stephanie rents a room from a friend.
- Dec. 26, 2003: Stephanie turns 18, and Florida officials stop courtesy supervision.
- May 4, 2004: The Genesee County courts' oversight of Stephanie is terminated by Judge David Newblatt, who finds she has turned 18, is "not attending school and is out of our jurisdiction."
- July 12, 2004: The state's supervision of Stephanie ends as DHS receives permission from the Michigan Children's Institute to discharge her as a ward. Although children

in Stephanie's situation usually remain under MCI supervision until age 19, acting Superintendent Bruce Hoffman approves the early discharge, saying she has not followed her independent living agreement or made herself available to caseworkers.

 2004: At age 18, Stephanie, working under the name "Allie Sin," becomes a popular adult film star, appearing in 13 adult movies released in 2004 alone.

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Fixing foster care

Who's responsible?

 Department of Human Services: This state agency takes over responsibility for the care of children taken from parents or guardians because of abuse or neglect. DHS caseworkers are supposed to find foster children who run away.

 Genesee County Family Court: Judges here decide when to take children from parents or guardians. Court referee Peggy Odette presides over special monthly hearings at which social workers report on progress they have made in locating runaways. She can subpoena people to testify about the whereabouts of runaways.

 Child Advocacy Team: This group of attorneys created a corporation and contracts with Genesee

County to represent the interests of children in the court system. Some of their runaway clients have never met the attorneys appointed to represent them.

- Juvenile Casework Services: This Genesee Circuit Court office arranges the special court hearings for missing foster children, monitoring cases to be sure hearings are held on each child as long as they are missing.

What can be done?

- Those committed to keeping foster children off the street are still working to improve the status quo. In September, a conference for judges, court workers, state Department of Human Services workers and others will share ideas about the best ways to find children missing from foster care.
- Foster parents - particularly those willing to work with teenagers - are always needed. For information about becoming a foster parent, call the Genesee County DHS office at (810) 760-2217.
- Help and support for foster parents is available from a number of sources online, including the Foster Parent Community, www.fosterparents.com. The site is designed for sharing information with foster and adoptive families and anyone involved with

at-risk children.

- There are several hot lines set up to help runaways, whether in foster care or not. The Runaway Emergency Action Center Hotline, (810) 233-8700, is operated locally. Others include the DHS-sponsored Runaway Assistance Program, (800) 292-4517, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, (800) THE-LOST.

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The missing

Despite new efforts in the past two years to find runaways from foster care, the number of missing children has not declined locally. Here are the 19 children and young adults missing from foster care in Genesee County as of May 17:

Nicole Bovee, 17: Born Feb. 2,
1989, missing since March 14

- Shawanica Bradley, 14: Born Sept. 14, 1991, missing since May 17, 2005
- China Brown, 16: Born July 17, 1989, missing since March 30
- Dan Ray Chandanais, 15: Born Sept. 12, 1990, missing since April 13
- Nicole Chaney, 16: Born Nov. 24, 1989, missing since April 3
- Ashley Cowan, 17: Born June 3, 1989, missing since May 4

- Carrie Davis, 16: Born Aug. 1, 1989, missing since Oct. 10
- Arielle Ewing, 17: Born Jan. 31, 1989, missing since Nov. 2
- Henry Marshall, 17: Born Oct. 7, 1988, missing since Sept. 20
- Mary Murphy, 17: Born May 8, 1989, missing since May 8
- Joseph Owens, 17: Born April 1, 1989, missing since Jan. 19
- Kyle Palmateer, 18: Born June 3, 1988, missing since April 13
- Cheyanne Perez, 13: Born Nov. 16, 1992, missing since March 22
- Kristina Pringle, 17: Born Oct. 6, 1988, missing since Jan. 6
- Ashley Sawyers, 14: Born Oct. 26, 1991, missing since Jan. 23
- Natasha Sawyers, 16: Born March 6, 1990, missing since Aug. 23
- Kaosha Stephens, 16: Born Oct. 5, 1989, missing since April 30, 2004
- Monique Tellis, 17: Born Dec. 11, 1988, missing since Aug. 12
- Ashley West, 16: Born March 8, 1990, missing since Dec. 6

Sources: State of Michigan, www.mfia.state.mi.us/awol/

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Published June 3, 2006

Hitting her stride: Sexton star overcomes broken home, mom's drug addiction

Senior races to a brighter future

By Todd Schulz
Lansing State Journal

Crystal Stanley was never scared of hurdles.

Never. Not even the first time she stepped on a track as a wide-eyed middle schooler. "I volunteered for them," she said with a laugh.

Not all of them. Some hurdles came at Crystal whether she was ready or not. At 17, the senior track star at Sexton High School already has cleared more obstacles than many people face in a lifetime.

She grew up without her father, Nathan. She hasn't spoken to him in nearly a decade and has no clue as to his whereabouts.

Her mother, Donna, is a recovering drug addict whose struggles have led her in and out of rehabilitation programs over the past 15 years.

She's currently clean and sober and staying at a homeless shelter in Lansing.

Crystal helped raise her 10-year-old half-sister, Misha White.

Though both girls are in the state's foster care system, Crystal lives independently in Potterville.Through it all, Crystal simply kept running

away from an often-destructive and chaotic home life and leaping over anything that impeded her path to success. Today, she'll try to win a title in her strongest event, the 300-meter hurdles, at the Division 2 State Championship meet.

Regardless of the outcome, Crystal already is a winner. She's clutching a full scholarship to Central Michigan University like a track baton and, despite the difficulties she's endured, racing toward a future of her own.

"I grew up so fast," Crystal said. "I didn't really get to have a childhood. It's been hard. But it's always something I've learned to push past and use, not as an excuse, but as a positive reason to do what I want to do."

Mother's love

Donna Stanley can't help smiling when she talks about her oldest daughter.

"That's my baby," she said. "She loves her momma, and I love her."

The depth of their love has been tested many times since Donna gave birth to Crystal on July 21, 1988, in Waco, Texas. Just three months later, Donna left Crystal's father and returned to her native Jackson.

But coming home didn't cure the young family's problems. In fact, they were just beginning. According to court documents, Donna Stanley said she's used crack cocaine on and off since Crystal was 3 years old.

"I started out just partying," Donna said. "Doing drugs in the '70s. All the kids were smoking pot, and so you just graduate from there."

After an initial stint in rehab, Donna stayed clean for most of Crystal's elementary school years.

"Those were the OK years," Crystal said. "Then, she was the best role model I could have possibly had. She was working and taking care of me and my sister."

String of relapses

But Donna, 46, then suffered the first in a string of relapses that splintered her family.

"Toeing the line with two daughters became hard for me, and I made some wrong choices," Donna said.

Crystal remembers watching her mom do drugs, getting locked out of the house because drug dealers were inside and being left alone with Misha for long stretches.

"I know she didn't mean a lot of the things she did," Crystal said. "Drugs make you do weird things."

Eventually, Donna came to Lansing, leaving Crystal and Misha to live with relatives in Jackson. The girls grudgingly joined her before Crystal entered ninth grade at Eastern High School. But soon after, Donna started using drugs again.

The girls landed in the foster care system, and, after a series of stays with relatives, a teammate and even her coach, Crystal now rents a guest house on the property of a Sexton teacher in Potterville. She has a cat named Flo, a 1993 blue Chevrolet Cavalier to get to school and a part-time job at Go Workout fitness center that, along with a bi-weekly stipend from the state, helps pay her bills.

"I prefer to have my own space," Crystal said. "It's probably the best situation for me right now."

Misha is living with Brenda Gibson, Donna's sister and a counselor in the Waverly School District. She sees Crystal periodically.

Meanwhile, Donna is living at the Volunteers of America shelter in Lansing, which offers a program to help homeless veterans return to independent living and employment. Donna, who served in the U.S. Army, is clean and sober, though she won't say for how long.

"It's been a while," she said, a pocket-size copy of the New Testament on the table in front of her. "I don't want to get into numbers."

All-around track star

Crystal is an all-around star at Sexton, where she transferred as a junior. She holds the school mark in the 800-meter run (2 minutes, 23.7 seconds) and also competes in relays, the 100 hurdles (second in the state last year and the high jump. Whatever her team needs, she does - and usually does well.

But the 300 hurdles are Crystal's favorite. She holds the school record (44.41 seconds), won the event three consecutive years at the Greater Lansing Honor Roll meet (a leg injury kept her from competing for a fourth earlier this week) and finished fourth at the state meet last year.

What makes Crystal so good? She's fearless and fast between the hurdles.

"She's willing to attack them," Sexton girls' track coach Kathy Hubbard said.

Most of all, Crystal is simply aching to win. For her, the races aren't about fun or fitness or even filling a trophy case. They're about her future. Every time she wins, a better life feels 300 meters closer.

"It's almost like a need," Hubbard said. "Her intensity is so high during practices and meets, some of the kids don't understand it. She's bringing all that (past frustration) with her."

Donna hasn't watched Crystal compete in more than a year. Chances are, she won't see today's state meet at Forest Hills Northern High School in Grand Rapids.

But she can't remember a time when her daughter wasn't running. And mom - who ran track growing up - likes to believe she provided some of Crystal's natural talent.

Donna also realizes she's fueled Crystal's career the wrong way.

"(Running) was an out-valve for her," Donna said. "That's how she channeled her anger. When she was mad at her mom, she decided to run, and that helped her excel. Instead of turning something inward, she channeled it outward."

Crystal got her start running for a summer track club in Jackson. She didn't know much, except the sport came naturally - and it beat going home.

"It started off as an escape," she said. "I love my mom dearly, but I just couldn't take a lot of the things she was doing to me. I needed a way out. I needed somewhere I could go where I could just be me and do what

I do."

Heading to CMU

Next fall, that somewhere will be Central Michigan University. Crystal can't wait to get to Mount Pleasant, where she plans to study physical therapy and perhaps psychology while competing in the heptathlon for the Chippewas.

"Bigger and better things," said Crystal, who's earned a grade point average near 4.0 for the past two years and was named Sexton's prom queen this spring.

"The way I'm going, I think I can do just about anything and everything I want to do. Once I'm done with school, I can just keep moving up from there."

Crystal doesn't want to leave her mom behind. At the same time, one senses she's trying to put a healthy distance between herself and Donna, with whom she talks regularly on the phone but sees only sporadically. Crystals loves her mother "unconditionally" but describes their relationship as "strained."

"I can't be around every time she wants me to because I do have a life, " Crystal said. "It's taken me so long to learn to say 'no' to her."

Crystal turns 18 in July, making her an adult. In Misha's case, Ingham County Circuit Court Judge Richard Garcia has recommended the state's Department of Human Services terminate Donna's parental rights.

But Donna is clinging to the hope of reuniting with Misha and staying

in Crystal's life. She's undergoing counseling, substance-abuse rehabilitation and regular drug screenings in addition to fulfilling confidential conditions set forth by the court. Garcia is slated to review the case Aug. 9.

"Now, the road to recovery is where I'm at, and I just want to make sure I'm doing right by them," she said. "It's about my daughters now, not about me. I'll be glad when I can look back and say, 'You silly girl and put it in the past. I'm ready to move forward with my life."

Meanwhile, Crystal - who is seeded third in the 300 hurdles today – is sprinting down a different path than the one her mom chose. And she has no plans to slow down, regardless of the hurdles she faces.

"I'm proud of Crystal's success," Donna said. "She earned it. She worked for it. She's developed into a beautiful young lady in spite of everything."

Young poet's words touch hearts outside cell Documentary on Maxey student reveals hard life, hope

Sunday, June 04, 2006

Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

He was a drug dealer, a 16-year-old aiming a loaded .45-caliber handgun at a guy who owed him money. Armed robbery, he figured, "was the best way I could get it."

Now he's a young poet - incarcerated.

He is 19, incarcerated at Maxey Boys Training School in Green Oak Township in southern Livingston County, and the subject of a 15-minute documentary on his life - reflected through the prism of his own poetry and the lens of a Northfield Township librarian.

Because he was incarcerated as a minor, Maxey will not release his name. State Department of Human Services spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet said state and federal laws forbid them from releasing the names of juveniles.

"Revealing the identity can result in discrimination against a youth when he or she leaves the facility," Sorbet said. Additionally, she said, "celebrity status can affect a youth's engagement and effort in our treatment program."

So the documentary - intended to be a teaching instrument - also conceals the poet's identity.

Within weeks, the poet is scheduled to be released from Maxey. He'll go to a halfway house in Ann Arbor, where he'll get a job and attend Washtenaw Community College. By 21, he'll be on his own.

And sometime this summer, the library will hold a large screening of his work, in the "Young Poet Incarcerated" DVD. After that, the DVD will go into the lending collection at the library, which serves Northfield Township including Whitmore Lake, and portions of Green Oak and Brighton townships, and to area schools.

Mike Ball, 53, is the librarian behind the documentary. Also an award-winning online humor columnist, Ball introduced a 12-week creative writing course at Maxey about 18 months ago. He started with nine maximum security juveniles, all violent offenders. He wasn't sure how his plan would go over. But as it worked out, he needn't have worried.

"I could see the fire in their eyes," Ball said. "I would come back from my sessions, and they would have to let the air out of me," he was so emotionally pumped up.

One kid stood out.

"This guy was clearly the leader of the pack," Ball said of the young man who would become the subject of the documentary.

The young poet was clearly a leader in class, not in a gang sense, but because he had strength of will, a desire to grow, Ball said. He is not at all physically imposing, but has a powerful message. He also has a natural ability to distill his experiences, his emotions, himself, into words and rhythms that resonate.

His way

The poet was born in Flint, the son of a junkie mother and strict father who moved him to Detroit when he was 9. The man and the boy were alone together for a while, before a now-beloved new stepmother, and younger siblings, came along.

But the poet was torn between the perceived "freedom" he experienced with his own mother and her family, and the straighten-up-and-fly-right expectations of a father who wasn't above cuffing the youngster when he got out of line.

And despite good grades, he was almost always out of line.

"I was always gravitating toward trouble. I was in touch with (my mother's family), and found (her way of life) more attractive."

His father was good, the poet said. "But strict. It was all one-sided. Everything was his way."

And the poet wanted it his way.

Eighteen months before a cop rode up on that ill-fated robbery, the poet left home. He crashed here and there, wherever. At 15, he spent four months in juvie, for a committing a break-in.

Crime, he maintains now, "isn't me. It wasn't me then, either. I did things to rebel, against my father, and society."

His father visits now, and he visits his father.

His mother doesn't visit. On a recent home visit, he hoped for a big, emotional welcome when he showed up at her door. It had been a long time. What he got instead was an off-hand, everyday kind of greeting that stung.

"I doubt she loves me. If that's love, I don't want to see hate," he said.

The poetry

Ball started his Maxey class with poetry, and connected immediately with the rap-ready teens. When he moved to short stories, "they were polite," but clearly uninterested. Ball got the message.

Despite their affinity for rap, what the teens wrote, what the poet writes, is true poetry, he said.

"It's much more complicated" than rap, he said. "This goes to the whole heart and soul of these kids - and they are kids - and you can see their hearts."

As the young poet emerged as the potential subject of a mini-documentary, Ball added a weekly solo session with him.

With backing from library Director Ron Loyd, Ball obtained $5,000 in grants from the Michigan Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Michigan Council of Arts and Cultural affairs. The library matched the grants with Ball's time on the library's dime.

Adding another $5,000 in services from a graphic designer put the bill for the 15-minute mini-documentary at $15,000.

The poet did the writing, but Ball interjected form. Ball asked the teen to hone the points he was trying to make into sharper instruments, the kind that can pierce a heart. The poet and Ball discussed the "bad seed" concept.

Is any child born bad?" Ball asked.

Eventually, the poet responded in verse:

"Where is God, and why did he abandon me in all of this madness,

And why hasn't he answered these questions I've been asking?

If God is my father, then I was born a bastard.

No cradles, no cribs, I was born in a casket. ...

Who would believe good crops come from bad seeds?

Never a bad seed,

Just planted in bad dirt,

Smothered by weeds."

In his work, the poet concedes that he initially regretted his crimes not because he committed them, but because he was caught.

"I didn't understand I was hurting people," he says. Now, he realizes he wasn't hurting just his victims, but also his father and the younger siblings who look up to him.

"I wish I wouldn't have done it in the first place," he said after six months in detention and 21 months at Maxey.

The poet is eager to taste freedom. But now he's glad he won't be alone, that he'll remain under supervision in a halfway house. It's comforting that "they're not just putting me out there."

His schooling at Washtenaw and eventually, he hopes, the University of Michigan, is paid for until he's 21.

"I want to be more educated. Not a thug," he said. "And I don't want to talk like one."

Because, among other things, he wants to become a motivational speaker.

The documentary

Ball helped the poet slow his natural rapid-fire delivery, to make the documentary accessible to a wider audience. The pair worked on pace, movement, diction. The timely pause. A sigh.

The poet composed before he met Mike Ball, but never really wrote his poetry down. Some of the pieces were rap. Others were the beginnings of true poetry, something more than simple repetition of a catchy phrase.

For the documentary, Ball backlit the poet against a dark screen. So the poet is a silhouette, but one that is in motion, dipping, gesturing, popping and pausing. And bowing his head with the weight of the world hanging from a yoke around his neck.

What hits Ball hardest, he said, is that "it's not just this guy. It's 100,000 of this guy" in the national juvenile justice system. "They're children, who have come to a place where the world's not working for them."

Sorbet said the documentary project is an important one.

"It demonstrates some of the talents of the youth in our facilities," she said. "Some people tend to focus on the negative aspects of these young men and women. This project showcases the positive talents of these individuals."

One of Ball's favorite moments in the documentary is one most viewers won't notice. It lasts less than a second.

When Ball shot a brief narrative for the middle of the video, he did it from inside the poet's stark, militarily neat cell. Ball had the poet slam the door on him - the way the door slams behind the poet every night. After the door closes, there's a flash of yellow in the bottom corner of the window.

It's the poet's uniform T-shirt, worn over khaki pants. The poet was checking on Ball, to see how he bore the finality of the sound.

When the documentary was complete, Ball screened it for the class. They swung and swayed and snapped their fingers, he said, a new Beat generation.

But first, the poet watched his work, his life, alone.

He wept.

It's not any more clear what will happen to "Young Poet Incarcerated," the documentary, than to "Young Poet," the man.

He earned his GED at Maxey while he worked on the documentary, and started college courses. He was allowed to start making home visits - while Ball lay awake the night before, silently chanting a mantra: "Don't mess up, don't mess up. don't mess up."

The poet didn't mess up. He returned as required, without getting into new trouble.

The documentary "doesn't sugarcoat anything, but it has a message of hope. It's realistic," Ball said. "That's the power of it - the fallacy in the power of the gun is where he's writing from."

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Michigan Report

June 2, 2006

ACCESS, SACRIFICE PART OF CONTROLLING HEALTH COSTS

MACKINAC ISLAND – Health care costs that continue to grow will continue to drive more companies to eliminate or constrain health insurance, and several experts said helping control costs could rely on both expanding access to health care and convincing Americans they may have to be willing to sacrifice some benefits.

The sobering assessment came as attendees to the Detroit Regional Chamber heard that studies showed costs at Michigan's hospitals are now the lowest in the Great Lakes states and lower than hospital costs nationwide.

In fact, the study showed that if Michigan's hospital costs were at the national average, state consumers would have paid about $1 billion more a year.

In some respects, that stands in contrast to the national health care picture, where Paul Ginsburg, a national expert with the Center for Studying Health Policy Change, said that for 30 years health care costs have grown at 2.5 percentage points faster than the gross domestic product.

While officials often worry that the aging population will continue to drive health care costs, Mr. Ginsburg said larger factors include obesity, the use of technology and drugs.

Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Lansing) said improving overall access to health care is critical to both cost controls and overall quality.

The U.S. spends twice as much as other industrialized nations on health care and yet has an estimated 46 million people without coverage, she said.

The nation has to look at health care as a right and not a privilege in order to address the issue, she said. "We cannot continue to cut costs, cut access and continue to pay more," she said.

Mr. Ginsburg said, "One of the most powerful tools to expand coverage is to contain costs." Increasing access to health care cost could be a motivator to addressing costs, he said.

Although, Mr. Ginsburg said America's leaders have not leveled with the public that lowering health care costs will actually mean sacrifice of some sort, whether through higher taxes or through reduced benefits.

But Dallas Salisbury of the Employee Benefit Research Institute said the public already is enduring many of those sacrifices. Because as people pay more for health care they are saving less for their retirements and going into more credit card debt.

HEALTH

25 YEARS OF AIDS: Epidemic scorns the impact of progress

Disease on rise in U.S. women, minorities

June 5, 2006

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

Twenty-five years ago today, the first cases of AIDS were reported in a weekly federal health publication, telling of a mysterious pneumonia among five gay men in Los Angeles.

Since then, 40.3 million people have been diagnosed with HIV or AIDS worldwide, including an estimated 16,200 in Michigan -- and 30 million have died.

Today, 1.1 million Americans are alive with HIV or AIDS and another quarter-million Americans are HIV-positive but unaware of it.

While there have been important successes against what is considered one of the worst diseases in history, serious challenges remain -- in both prevention and treatment.

The climbing numbers of cases among women and members of minority groups reflect troubling problems that hinder progress against AIDS in the United States, concluded a report released last month by Public Health Watch Project, an independent group that monitors government compliance in health goals. The report is at www.publichealthwatch.info.cq For more than a decade, more than half of the 40,000 new HIV cases in the United States each year have been among African Americans, and 18% among Hispanics, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. And, now, one in four of the new cases is among women.

In Michigan, of the 11,432 people living with HIV or AIDS, 59% are African Americans and 4% are Hispanics, the Michigan Department of Community Health reported.

Two-thirds of Michigan's cases are in metro Detroit, where AIDS organizations are intensifying ways to reach HIV-positive women, Hispanic people and gay black men. On June 27, AIDS Partnership Michigan, the state's largest service group in the field, plans to blanket an east-side Detroit neighborhood with flyers to encourage HIV testing.

"The reality is, we have a whole new generation of kids who were not around in the beginning of the epidemic," said Dr. Tammy Lundstrom, an AIDS physician at Harper University Hospital and the Wayne State University School of Medicine, in Detroit. "You can't turn your attention away ... because there's a whole new audience to educate."

Among the nation's successes in treatment and prevention:

- Transmission of the AIDS virus to babies at birth occurs in less than 2% of all U.S. pregnancies.
- The nation's blood supply has been considered safe for more than a decade, largely eliminating the risk of transmission to hemophiliacs and transfusion recipients.
- Treatments that prolong life for years, maybe decades, have dramatically curbed deaths from AIDS, which peaked in 1995, both nationwide and in Michigan.

But cost remains a problem as more people live longer with HIV. A majority lack insurance, rely on government programs for help or have limited insurance plans that don't fully pay for care. Monthly treatment and testing, now about $1,000 to $1,500, may climb to $20,000 a year with costlier new regimens, experts say.

For the first time, Michigan this summer could run out of federal and state money to pay for free AIDS drugs for uninsured people, said Dr. Louis Saravolatz, chief of medicine at St. John Hospital and Medical Center in Detroit. He sits on a state AIDS drug assistance committee that oversees AIDS drugs used in the Medicaid program.

A bill that would reauthorize money to fund the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides treatment and social services for uninsured or underinsured people living with HIV or AIDS, is pending in Congress.

Saravolatz and others applaud advances. But the reality is, AIDS remains puzzling and a cure has been elusive.

"We haven't hit any home runs," Saravolatz said.

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AIDS TIME LINE

- **June 5, 1981:** Five cases of an unusual pneumonia in men in the Los Angeles area are published in a weekly report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

1982: The term AIDS is coined, for acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

1983: A virus is identified as the cause of AIDS.

1985: The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approves the first AIDS blood test; blood agencies begin testing for the AIDS virus in donated blood; the CDC recommends voluntary HIV testing and counseling for high-risk pregnant women.

1986: The World Health Organization announces a global AIDS strategy.

1987: The first AIDS drug, AZT, sold as Retrovir, is approved by the FDA. The compound was synthesized by Wayne State University chemist Jerome Horwitz.

1991: Earvin (Magic) Johnson, a basketball star with the Los Angeles Lakers, is diagnosed with HIV. Johnson grew up in Lansing and played at Michigan State.

1992: Detroiter Mary Fisher, daughter of investor Max Fisher, addresses the Republican National Convention about AIDS and the story of her infection.

1995: CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend voluntary testing and counseling of all pregnant women for the AIDS virus and use of antiviral drugs to prevent transmission to babies.

2000: AIDS becomes the leading cause of death in Africa. New strains of the virus, resistant to treatment, emerge.

2002: Percentage of babies born HIV-positive -- a number that had declined since hitting a peak in 1991 -- reaches a new low of less than 2% of all U.S. births.

Patricia Anstett

IN THEIR WORDS

- **"The reality** is that we have a whole new generation of kids becoming sexually active who were not around in the beginning of the epidemic. We're still seeing new cases. We haven't done enough about prevention."

-- Dr. Tammy Lundstrom, an AIDS physician at Wayne State University School of Medicine and Harper University Hospital.

"Unfortunately, people did very poorly in the beginning. The average life expectancy was nine months. Now, the average life expectancy for 80% of the patients is at least nine years."

-- Dr. Louis Saravolatz, chief of medicine and longtime AIDS physician, St. John Hospital and Medical Center in Detroit, speaking of U.S. patients.

"We need to fund social services, not just medical care. People expect people can pull themselves up by their bootstraps. Well, we deal with clients who don't have bootstraps."

-- Barbara Murray, executive director, AIDS Partnership Michigan.

"We need to recognize the leadership the United States has provided in the global fight on AIDS. But the same kind of leadership hasn't been carried out in the country."

-- Dr. David Satcher, former surgeon general of the United States and interim president, Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta. He is a leader in addressing health disparities in the United States, where AIDS disproportionately affects minority people.

Patricia Anstett

GET INFORMED

- LOCAL Help

- AIDS Partnership Michigan, 800-872-2437; www.aidspartnership.org

- Midwest AIDS Prevention Project; 888-226-6366; www.aidsprevention.org

Free events

The UNAIDS Global Coalition on Women & AIDS is having these events Friday in metro Detroit:

- 1-3 p.m., Latino Family Services, 3815 W. Fort St., Detroit. Speeches directed at Hispanic women and girls and a display of 90 panels of the AIDS Memorial Quilt.

- 6-8 p.m., Cobo Center, Detroit. Religious leaders' summit. Space limited to 100 guests.

- 7:30-9 p.m., "An Evening with the Jewish Community," Mary Fisher and others, Temple Israel, 5725 Walnut Lake Road, West Bloomfield.

MORE RESOURCES

- To find an AIDS testing site, www.hivtest.org
- National Institutes of Health, www.25yearsofaids.oar.nih.gov
- Kaiser Family Foundation, www.kff.org/hivaids

- Global Health Council, www.globalhealth.org

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheetsallcqbypat

DID YOU KNOW?

- In the United States, the biggest progress against AIDS has been in ridding the blood supply of the virus and reducing cases among babies who contract the virus from HIV-positive mothers at birth.

Nearly all people infected with HIV through blood transfusions received those transfusions before 1985, the year HIV testing began for all donated blood. Among infants, the risk of contracting the virus is as low as 1.5% if women take antiviral drugs during pregnancy.

- There is no evidence that HIV is spread from toilet seats, swimming pools, telephones, insects, kissing, sweat or tears. It can be transmitted by oral sex in rare cases.

- If you are sexually active and not monogamous, you should be tested at least every six months for the AIDS virus.

- Some people may contract the AIDS virus but never progress to chronic stages of the disease. Factors related to progression of the disease include genetics, a person's immune function and other chronic health problems.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention

HEALTH

Grandma, 82, tells the kids: Do as I say, not as I did

June 5, 2006

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

At 82, Alice Renwrick of Detroit is one of the oldest people in Michigan with AIDS. "Everyone who is having sex is at risk," said Renwrick, a grandmother of two and great-grandmother of one. "Even if a woman feels her husband is very true," she can't follow him around every day.

Renwrick, a retired nurse, said she contracted the AIDS virus from a partner of 10 years who was an intravenous drug user. They used condoms for five years, then stopped when they tired of using protection.

She knew he was an addict. She knew better.

"I took a gamble," she said. "That's what I did. I gambled with my life."

Renwrick is one of eight people in Michigan with HIV or AIDS who are 80 or older, according to Eve Mokotoff, HIV/AIDS epidemiology manager at the Michigan Department of Community Health.

The oldest is 90. Another 174 Michiganders ages 60-79 have the AIDS virus.

Renwrick was diagnosed in 1997. But she believes she has lived with the AIDS virus since at least 1993, when her partner died from complications of AIDS. She did not bother to get tested for four years. After her partner's death, "I just gave up," Renwrick said. "I didn't tell anyone about it."

In the four years prior to her diagnosis, Renwrick lost 60 pounds as the disease progressed. A sister insisted she see a doctor at the University of Michigan. Renwrick said physicians there challenged her request to get tested for HIV, because of her age. She persisted. The test results showed she was HIV-positive. Renwrick went out afterward for lunch with her two sisters, and one, a notorious penny-pincher, picked up the tab. Renwrick was touched. They enjoyed the meal, went home and started learning about AIDS and working on a treatment plan for her.

Renwrick said her sisters have remained helpful and supportive, accompanying her to numerous doctor appointments and buoying her spirits.

Renwrick had more work to do on her own attitude. She saw her diagnosis as a death sentence. Referred to AIDS Partnership Michigan, she met caseworker Robin Ware, who told her to stop feeling sorry for herself.

Renwrick said Ware told her, "You volunteered for this. No one gave you nothing. You're not a victim."

The next day, Ware introduced her to a young girl who contracted HIV from her mother at birth.

"She's a victim," Renwrick said Ware told her.

At her first appointment at the AIDS clinic at Harper University Hospital, "the whole team came out," Renwrick said. "I don't think they had seen anyone with so much gray hair."

Aside from a recent bout with pneumonia, Renwrick has stayed out of the hospital. She sees her physician every few months.

She used to take more than two dozen AIDS drugs, but thanks to new combination medicines that join classes into individual pills, she's down to just two pills, twice a day. The medicines attack the virus at different stages of its evolution. Aside from these drugs, HIV/AIDS patients take medicines to combat other diseases, such as pneumonia.

Renwrick's biggest current health problems stem from the fact that she smoked for many years. She has lung problems and high blood pressure.

Renwrick has been married three times and has outlived her two children. She raised their kids and a half-dozen others. When she broke the news of her AIDS diagnosis to her grandchildren, she told them: "If this can happen to me, it can happen to you. Take care of yourself. You wouldn't like taking these pills."

Renwrick looks 10-15 years younger and is trim from daily walks. She gives speeches in Detroit's AIDS community and has won numerous citations, including a Spirit of Detroit award from the city.

She has a designated "condom drawer" in her living room so her grandchildren and their friends never have to worry about not having one.

"Parents can't do that because they don't want to look like they are encouraging their children that way," Renwrick said. "But grandmas can do that. This disease is worse than encouraging your children to have sex."

HEALTH

Minister with HIV becomes activist, fights the stigma

June 5, 2006

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

Before taking a job in the early 1990s in an AIDS organization in Detroit, Hank Millbourne had to overcome his own reticence to work in the field, at a time when men he knew were dying by the dozens each month.

Millbourne, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, prayed for direction. He recalled his prayers went something like this:

"The Lord said, 'This is what I want you to do.' I said, 'OK, if I'm going to do this, just don't bring it to my house.' That was my deal with the Lord. I didn't want it sitting in my living room."

Within a few years, a young man he raised contracted HIV. Then Millbourne found white spots in his own throat in 1997, a common early symptom of HIV, and a doctor diagnosed him with the AIDS virus.

"I had a lot of questions about why this was happening to me," said Millbourne, 52, of Detroit. He said he heard the Lord saying: "I've taken care of you all these years. Why would you doubt that I wouldn't take care of you now? I've called you to do my work. Don't doubt me on this."

Millbourne is not certain how he contracted HIV. Perhaps it was from a few blood transfusions he had for anemia. Perhaps it was from sex, but he was in a monogamous relationship for 13 years with a man who remains HIV-negative, he said.

He discloses his HIV diagnosis to others when he believes it's important for them to know. "It depends on who needs to know and what they need to know," he said. No one has rejected him, "though I've had to do some education."

Millbourne has no HIV symptoms. He is diligent about his well-being to the point that his doctor jokingly calls him Dr. Millbourne. He is a living example of thousands with HIV who remain healthy for years and work full-time. He takes only two pills, twice a day. Both are new AIDS medicines that combine classes of drugs into a single pill.

Millbourne fights to end stigmas about homosexuality. One way he does that is with words. He prefers not to describe himself as gay. He calls himself an "open, same-gender-loving man."

"For me, gay is rather constricting," he said. "It doesn't begin to describe my multiple identities as a black man."

Millbourne, who holds master's degrees in politics, social work and divinity from the University of Michigan and Cornell University, has given countless speeches on AIDS issues, baring his private life to others. He has helped thousands as an AIDS caseworker. He is associate executive director of AIDS Partnership Michigan, a nonprofit organization, heading its prevention programs. The agency is Michigan's largest AIDS services provider and one of the state's largest HIV testing and information agencies.

Millbourne blames the stigma for many new HIV cases.
"In certain segments of our community, we were just late coming to the table," he said. "Parts of our community didn't want to deal with HIV because dealing with HIV means you deal with sexuality and sexual orientation and substance abuse.
"We won't see a decline in the infection rates until we see this as a community problem. We all have to do something. Not just AIDS Partnership Michigan, but the block clubs and the schools, fraternities and sororities. We all have a piece to do, if we're going to turn this around."

HEALTH

Patient says life is good if you get help, listen to doc

June 5, 2006

BY PATRICIA ANSTETT
FREE PRESS MEDICAL WRITER

He is a man who has chosen to live his life as a woman.
He likes dresses, Barbie dolls and animals.
He has breast implants.
For more than 30 years, Robert Wray worked as a stripper and female impersonator under the stage name Dee Dee Sharpe.
Wray, or Dee Dee, as he prefers to be known, was in a monogamous relationship with his partner of 15 years.
"He cheated on me," Wray said of the probable way he contracted AIDS. Most likely, his partner had the AIDS virus and didn't know it.
When Dee Dee lost 62 pounds and went to the doctor, he was diagnosed with full-blown AIDS. That was more than 10 years ago.
Dee Dee is 52 and lives alone in Detroit. The partner "has passed on," not of AIDS, he said. He has not been involved in a sexual relationship since his diagnosis. "I couldn't live with the idea I infected someone," he said. "I'm an old widow; that's the way it was."
Only in the beginning did he wonder, "How am I going to pay the bills? Am I going to lose my house?" He has paid the bills and kept his house.
Along the way, he has met what he calls terrific doctors, nurses and caseworkers through Harper University Hospital, the Visiting Nurse Association and Latino Family Services, a Detroit organization that helped him fill out paperwork to get Medicaid insurance and Social Security disability coverage. "I'm lucky, lucky, lucky," he said.
He expects to be around many, many more years, thanks to his Harper physician, Dr. Tammy Lundstrom.
Lundstrom "talks to you, not at you. She lets you know exactly what's going on," he said. "In my case, I do what I'm told. I don't ask a lot of questions because I'm not going to understand it anyway. You just tell me what I need to do to keep above ground and I'm a happy camper."
Dee Dee takes dozens of pills a day. Many are vitamins, and others are for AIDS-related conditions such as neuropathy, which results in tingling and weakness in the legs and feet.
His attitude is accepting. "I've known and lost quite a few people, friends with AIDS," he said. "I really wasn't that scared of it. I knew it was bad and it was something I'd have the rest of my life. But I've also known through helping my friends I'm not going to die instantly. Plus I'm old and done it all. It really wasn't that traumatic."
A handler who has shown hundreds of dogs at shows, Dee Dee has a strong circle of friends who support him, accompany him to the shows and vacation with him in Saugatuck, where he wants his ashes strewn and buried.

He works at a Cass Corridor dog day-care business and volunteers at Wags, a group that helps people with HIV who have pets. He said of his future living with AIDS: "I don't think it's going to take me right away. I believe only the good die young. ... I'm gonna be here forever."

OAKLAND COUNTY

Gays' fear of AIDS fading, some advocates fear

June 5, 2006

BY STEVE NEAVLING
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Amid the rainbow flags, thumping techno music and gay couples holding hands at the Motor City Pride 2006 festival in downtown Ferndale on Sunday was a reality some advocates fear is forgotten.

With more than 11,000 Michigan residents living with HIV or AIDS, the global epidemic that seized the world's attention in the 1980s is still killing. But the attention it receives is fading, said Edith Graybill, 33, a board member of Steppin' Out, a nonprofit that advocates services to people with AIDS.

"AIDS has been around so long that people have become complacent," said Graybill. "People aren't paying attention to it anymore. Everybody was terrified in the '80s, but now ... there's a perception that AIDS isn't as scary as it once used to be."

Graybill was among a group of volunteers signing up people for the 15th annual AIDS Walk Detroit, which has raised $3 million for organizations that serve the AIDS community. Last year's walk raised $250,000. Organizers say it's the largest AIDS fund-raiser in the state.

This year's walk is scheduled for Sept. 17 in downtown Royal Oak.

Volunteers said the lack of attention to the deadly virus has diminished local services to people with HIV and AIDS. The walk supports services that range from subsidized housing to nutrition education.

"There are people dying every year of AIDS, and I think people have forgotten about it," said Bradley Gartin, 29, of Hazel Park, who said he will participate in the walk for the fifth straight year.

Over the weekend, tens of thousands of people filled downtown Ferndale, where dozens of vendors under colorful canopies passed out flyers, buttons, T-shirts and rainbow-colored necklaces that advocate gay rights.

Tanya Maglothin, 28, admired the turnout as she held her girlfriend's hand.

"It's nice to be normal for a day," said Maglothin of Macomb Township. "You don't get harassed or bashed."

On the edge of town, a man held a sign that read: "Stop gay partner benefits."

To participate in the AIDS walk, visit *www.aidswalkdetroit.org* or call 248-399-9255.

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Step Up AIDS Fight

June 5, 2006

Twenty-five years after AIDS crept into humanity's bloodstream, it is simply unforgivable that the world is not even close to stopping its spread.

Yes, there has been some progress in some places, but the plague is still growing, with at least 40.3 million people infected, more than 2 million of them children under age 15. Five million new diagnoses of HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS, were made last year, and more than 3 million people died of the disease, including half a million children.

Stemming this tide is going to take, first, honesty. The world needs to know just how bad the situation is. That calls for accurate assessments from governments in places such as China and Russia, and accurate information from political leaders who try to dismiss the disease as a Western conspiracy, even telling men that the best way to "cleanse" themselves of the virus is by having sex, willing or not, with a virgin.

The best tools against AIDS are education and condoms. But combating the disease also will require pharmaceutical companies to make the virus-fighting drugs cheaper and more readily available.

Last week, the United Nations, as it often does, led the way with a high-level meeting on AIDS and a renewed commitment to fighting it. But all the deep, profound and grave concern expressed will mean nothing if every nation does not engage in the most basic tenets of the fight: recognition of the problem, honesty about its causes and real money to back up the fight. Unfortunately, that didn't happen to a significant enough degree last week.

No single or small group of countries can solve this. Nor can the nonprofits and physicians and nurses fighting the good fight in their own small way. It will take a sustained global effort.

That's why it's so destructive when the United States tries to chip away at the United Nations' credibility. It will take a unified effort by every country, led by a unifying body, to tackle the greatest contributors to the spread of the disease: poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, underdevelopment, the sex trade, high incarceration rates, war and natural disaster. Each feeds the other. When soldiers rampage and typhoons ravage, women and children often fall prey to the kinds of abuse and violence that, among other things, perpetuate this disease.

Although the United States has stepped up its anti-AIDS efforts under the Bush administration, it has also stepped back. The General Accountability Office, the nonpartisan watchdog arm of Congress, recently said that the American investment in the global AIDS fight is undercut by an overemphasis on sexual abstinence as the only effective strategy. On practically the eve of the UN conference, the U.S. rejected for a fifth straight year a $34-million allocation for the United Nations Population Fund, primarily an educational agency.

The point here is that every country is going to have to put something aside -- its embarrassment at the spread of a sexually transmitted disease; its shabby history on female empowerment; its own, unrelated, abortion politics -- if AIDS is ever to be defeated.

The 25th anniversary of this disease is no cause for celebration. But it should be cause for the world to unite against a truly common enemy.

JEFF GERRITT: Young voice helps break a lethal silence on HIV

June 5, 2006

Ashely Ware was born with HIV and can't remember when she didn't know it.
Maybe that's why the 17-year-old is so at ease talking about the disease, or maybe it's just her special strength. Either way, she knows that speaking out is one way to beat a disease that people too often cover with a deadly silence.
"I was born with HIV for a reason: to deliver a message of hope and awareness," Ashely, a graduating senior at Redford Union High School, told me last week. "AIDS is one of the most preventible diseases if we know and do the right things and take the right precautions. If we did, my generation could be the last to see HIV."
Ashely contracted HIV from her mother, Robin Ware, who didn't know she was infected until she
was pregnant. Robin Ware died three years ago, at 46, of AIDS-
related complications. She had contracted HIV from Ashely's father, who died when Ashely was 15
months old.
I know where Ashely gets her courage and compassion.
In 1997, I spent two days with her mother, then a social worker for AIDS Partnership Michigan, for an article on AIDS in Detroit. We walked up and down the Cass Corridor together, as she talked to drug addicts and prostitutes about medical insurance, HIV testing, condoms and not sharing needles to prevent infection. Not everyone welcomed the message, especially the pimps who didn't like her getting in their business, but she didn't care how people talked to her; she just cared about them.
Ashely has the same strength and heart. In school and out, she has spoken to many people about her disease, hoping it will help them.
Most of her classmates at Redford Union, where she has served as a mentor and peer mediator, know that she has HIV. No one treats her differently, she said. "I have such a strong personality. I think people know that, whether they like it or not, I'm not going to care.
"HIV is part of me, but it's not who I am. It doesn't define me."
Ashely has always known, in some way, about HIV -- her mother made sure of that. She used the PacMan video game to explain HIV to her 4-year-old daughter. "HIV was the PacMan and the little things that PacMan ate were my good cells, or my T-cells," Ashely said.
She understood the stigma of the disease before she understood the disease. When her mother tried to enroll her in a private preschool when she was 3, none would accept her.
After her mother died, Ashely moved in with her grandparents in Redford and now stays with her best friend's mother. An honor student, she'll attend the University of Wisconsin this fall on an academic scholarship, studying business and psychology.
Ashely's health is excellent, the virus undetectable. She takes seven pills a day to strengthen her immune system and plans to live a long life.

"I'm not worried," she said. "I feel that, when God's ready to take me home, he'll take me home. I'm healthy right now; so there's nothing to worry about. My allergies give me more problem than my HIV."

After college, Ashely plans to start a nonprofit foundation to raise awareness about AIDS and prevention, especially among African Americans.

"You need to start in the schools, because parents, for some reason, are afraid to talk to their kids about sex and sexually transmitted diseases," she said. "You're never too young to learn."

In southeast Michigan, infection rates for African Americans are seven times higher than for whites, and 17 times higher for black women than for white women. With less than 10% of the state's population, Detroit has more than 40% of Michigan's estimated 16,200 HIV and AIDS cases. Still, many of Detroit's leaders, including the mayor and many of the city's influential ministers, have been shamefully silent about a public health epidemic in their own city. Their silence contributes mightily to the spread and stigma of AIDS and HIV.

By having the courage to tell her story and live life on her own terms, Ashely is breaking that lethal silence and carrying on her mother's legacy.

JEFF GERRITT is a Free Press editorial writer. Contact him at gerritt@freepress.com or 313-222-6585.

Editorial

June 5, 2006

Add to fund, to reach more in need

June 5, 2006

States and agencies on the front lines of the battle against AIDS are fighting over how to split a woefully inadequate pot of money. Funding for the Ryan White Care Act -- providing medical care, prescription drugs, testing and support services for low-income AIDS and HIV patients -- has stayed at roughly $2 billion annually for the last five years, despite growing numbers of cases.

Instead of adding money to handle increased needs, Congress is looking to shift it around. Proposed new formulas would take away money from Northeastern and Western states with older AIDS populations and shift funds to states, especially in the South, with faster growing infection rates. Michigan, which gets about $15 million a year in Ryan White funding, would probably get about the same.

Proponents of the changes can make a good case that Southern and rural areas have been overlooked and need more money, but so can urban areas with established and growing populations. Yes, more money is needed for primary medical care, but that should not mean less for the support services that are so important to HIV-infected people in impoverished cities like Detroit.

The nation can afford to spend more on fighting HIV and AIDS and helping the more than 1 million Americans who are infected, half of whom are inadequately cared for or not cared for at all. It's a matter of mustering the political will to do so.

The community-based agencies that receive Ryan White funding, like Aids Partnership Michigan, are generally lean and efficient. They employ dedicated people with much experience and sensitivity in working with people infected with HIV and AIDS. But as their caseloads grow, they need more help. Increasing funding for the Ryan White Care Act is the best way to do that.

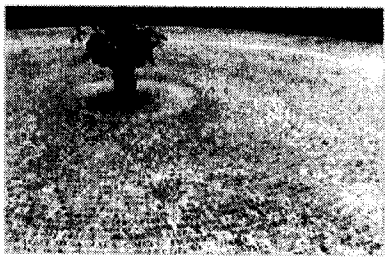
The State of AIDS, 25 Years After the First, Quiet Mentions

Jim Wilson/The New York Times

Cyclists in San Francisco readied for a ride marking 25 years since the first reports of AIDS.

By THE NEW YORK TIMES
Published: June 5, 2006

On June 5, 1981, in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, brief note was taken of a peculiar cluster of pneumonia cases in five otherwise healthy gay men.



Photographs: AIDS, 25 Years Later

Suzanne DeChillo/The New York Times

Joan Vileno was a nurse in New York at the start of the AIDS pandemic. "In those days," she said, "all of our patients died."

The item was the first official mention of a scourge that had no name, no known means of transmission, no treatment and no cure.

AIDS, as it would eventually be called, was already spreading fear in America's gay enclaves, where before long half the young men who came of age at the dawn of the gay liberation movement would be infected, stigmatized, ravaged by rare infections and cancers, and die. It soon reached into neighborhoods already burdened by poverty and drug abuse.

For years after that federal report, one of the few certainties was that this disease, to quote other reports, was "invariably fatal." The United Nations estimates that today, H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS, has infected more than 65 million people, 25 million of whom have died.

Eventually, scientists discovered the virus that caused AIDS and a test to screen for it. They learned the primary routes of transmission — unprotected sexual intercourse, intravenous drug use and prenatal infection. They found a cocktail of medications that slowed the disease's progression, at least in America. In Africa and Asia, AIDS continues to cut a deadly swath.

The Nurse

The difference between then and now is stark for Joan Vileno, a nurse at Montefiore Medical Center in New York. "In those days," she said, "all of our patients died."

Ms. Vileno, 57, said she chose to start her career at an urban academic medical center for the "unique experiences" that setting would provide. But she had no idea how unique those experiences would be. "No textbook could prepare us for what we were about to see," she said.

In the early 1980's, Ms. Vileno held the hands of angry, terrified and scorned patients, mostly intravenous drug users. They were admitted with lethal infections, rarely seen today, that left them gasping for breath, covered with cancerous lesions, blind, demented and wasted to skin and bones.

There were no medications to cure them of a disease then called Gay Related Immune Deficiency, or GRID, although at Montefiore, in the Bronx, the patients were rarely gay. In a study of a drug that proved ineffective, the average survival time of 300 Montefiore participants was eight months.

Today, Ms. Vileno runs a program for AIDS patients 50 and over who have lived long enough to also have the medical problems that come with middle age.

But a quarter-century ago, absent any effective treatment, the staff improvised. "The things we were able to do had nothing to do with our job descriptions," she said.

Many patients were unwilling to come to the AIDS clinic lest they be seen by someone they knew. So Ms. Vileno made house calls. Other patients, shunned by family and friends, all but moved in to the ad hoc clinic — then a bit of borrowed office space with a tiny staff; now a vast and humming operation.

Ms. Vileno once took a toddler home for the weekend so a husband could stay in the hospital with his dying wife. She organized a wedding in the clinic, officiated by a minister married to a staff member.

When funeral parlors refused to handle bodies, for fear of contagion, Ms. Vileno found a willing undertaker and invited him to staff meetings so he would feel like part of the team.

And returning from an AIDS conference in Paris, she went directly to the hospital. Four patients had died that week, one of them estranged from his family. He had designated Ms. Vileno his representative, so the morgue could not release the body for burial without her signature.

"Everything we did was out of the box," she said. "People today think, 'What are you talking about?' But it was a unique point in time, hopefully never to be repeated."

JANE GROSS

The Mother

ATLANTA — Lisa Mysnyk describes the man who gave her H.I.V. as "one of those African-American men who can't seem to stay out of jail." Still, she stayed with him for three years. Sometimes they used condoms. Sometimes they did not.

Ms. Mysnyk, who is also black, now knows that "sometimes" can be a very dangerous word.

"I got caught up in the idea that he wouldn't cheat on me," she said.

Just over half of new H.I.V. infections in the United States are in blacks, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

Three years ago, her boyfriend tested positive for the virus while in prison. The staff made him call all his sexual partners to warn them about their own risk. When he phoned Ms. Mysnyk, he said he had something to tell her, but he could not seem to get it out. She finally heard the news from a prison nurse.

Her boyfriend called two other women that day, both of them younger than Ms. Mysnyk, who was 34.

While she waited for her test results, Ms. Mysnyk, a single mother of two young sons, told the doctor, "If I didn't have the Lord by my side, I'd be a nervous wreck right now."

When the doctor told her she had H.I.V., Ms. Mysnyk started to cry. Her doctor cried with her.

A few days later, she taught her younger son, who was 7 at the time, how to use a condom. She had a no-nonsense conversation with her 14-year-old about sexually transmitted diseases. "I didn't want him to ever have to be afraid," she said.

In the beginning, her own fear centered on how long she would live and what she could do to keep herself alive. "I started taking all these medications," she said, "and I never liked taking pills."

Ms. Mysnyk takes six pills a day, her virus level is undetectable and her immune system continues to be strong. She thinks she could live 30 or 40 more years as long as the drugs keep working.

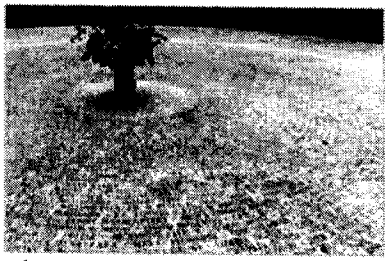
She imagines that having the virus is a lot like having any other chronic disease. But unlike most other diseases, she knows, H.I.V. can almost always be avoided.

That is why, when she learned that a young woman who lives in her building was coping with a second unplanned pregnancy, Ms. Mysnyk, rather than offering words of sympathy, asked her a blunt personal question: "Do you and your boyfriend use condoms?"

Her neighbor admitted that sometimes they did and sometimes they did not. "Sometimes," Ms. Mysnyk told her, "isn't good enough."

The Prostitute

MUMBAI, India — With the strut of a baby-kissing politician, Mrs. Shah strolled down the byways of the red-light district the other day, pausing every few steps to offer a hug and a stern lecture to the prostitutes.


Photographs: AIDS, 25 Years Later

Mrs. Shah — tall and serene at 35, wearing a turquoise sari — began each conversation gently, with a joke or a compliment. A woman's makeup, she might say, was looking nice. Then she would lean in closer, glance around for onlookers, and pull out a pamphlet from the AIDS organization for which she works part time. Pointing at explicit photographs, she fired out her lessons: This is how to wear a condom; this is what an infection looks like.

When her shift ends, Mrs. Shah, who is being identified only by her common last name to help protect her identify, resumes her night job. By midnight, if luck is kind, she will be in a cheap hotel, earning a few dollars from a strange man for what she calls the only work she knows. And because she must survive, Mrs. Shah will fail to tell him — even as she insists on a condom — that she is a prostitute with H.I.V.

The United Nations reported recently that India had become the H.I.V./AIDS capital of the world, its 5.7 million infections surpassing South Africa's 5.5 million. Some Indian officials have disputed that number, but the government has acknowledged that the spread of the virus shows no signs of easing.

AIDS is often cast as an epidemic of bad choices. But it is also, in the life of Mrs. Shah, an epidemic of the choiceless.

Since childhood, she has walked on a path leading, with ever greater inevitably, to AIDS. At 13, she was forcibly married to a 35-year-old who kicked her out when she

complained of his infidelities. Days later, a woman found her on the platform of a Bombay train station and offered to find her a job as a maid. By evening, she had been sold to a brothel for 10,000 rupees, $220 today.

Once, she said, a customer became a lover, married her and took her away. When he needed money, though, she was back on the street. She protested, and he stabbed her in the cheek and back, burned her with kerosene on the belly and legs and shaved her hip-length black hair down to the scalp.

Two years ago, a test found her H.I.V. positive. "I went crazy," she said. She drank and took pills, trying to kill herself. Then social workers approached her, looking for prostitutes to educate about AIDS.

"I had an idea," she said over a cup of tea, "that what happened to me, I would not let happen to other girls."

ANAND GIRIDHARADAS

The Researcher

SAN FRANCISCO — Work on AIDS remains his calling, but the grand emotions of the early years have subsided. Today, both the disease and Dr. Paul A. Volberding, a physician and researcher who is graying and has an arthritic curl to his fingers, have settled in.

Strangers on airplanes no longer accost him with questions about quick cures, and young men no longer die in his arms. Now if a patient dies, he said, "We think we've done something wrong."

Dr. Volberding, 56, who for many years ran the AIDS program at San Francisco General Hospital, now heads medical services at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center. These days his AIDS research, like much of the pandemic, is focused on Africa.

"It feels good to do something so clearly needed that improves health so dramatically," he said of his work in Uganda.

Dr. Volberding has been touched by AIDS since July 1, 1981, his first day at San Francisco General, when he treated a 22-year-old gay man with Kaposi's sarcoma, a

disease that until then was seen mostly in the elderly. After he came across other cases, Dr. Volberding did what academics often do: He studied them.

Because established physicians lacked the time and often the inclination to take on what was known as the gay disease, the field was wide open. At 31 and with a staff of one (himself), Dr. Volberding opened one of the first clinics anywhere for people with the disease. A year later, with assistance, he began conducting small clinical trials.

"The patients were so much like us," Dr. Volberding said. "We were all young." Many of them, he recalled, listened to the same music. He still keeps an old Grateful Dead poster on his office wall.

In those early years, Dr. Volberding and his colleague, Dr. Marcus Conant, both professors at the University of California at San Francisco School of Medicine, listed every patient in the city on a blackboard. They knew each by name.

Photographs: AIDS, 25 Years Later

Financing was scarce. Dr. Volberding remembered Dr. Conant suggesting that they wait until there were 1,000 cases, and then the government would take notice.

Many researchers thought they, too, were at risk. Both Dr. Volberding and his wife, Dr. Molly Cooke, also a physician, experienced such fears. Once when Dr. Volberding found a blotch on his skin, colleagues had to reassure him it was not Kaposi's sarcoma. All that has changed, too. Today, Dr. Volberding said, he and his patients commiserate mostly about arthritis and aging.

CAROL POGASH

The Artist

Art is forced by crisis to become political, and so it has been with AIDS, says the playwright Tony Kushner. The early works came in partly as a response to a society that was slow, even resistant, to accept the reality of a new pandemic.

"It was so clearly the dominant culture's mandate that AIDS death and AIDS suffering should be silenced," Mr. Kushner said. "The obvious thing to fight it would be to speak of it and articulate it."

What followed were works like Larry Kramer's 1985 play, "The Normal Heart," and Mr. Kushner's own Pulitzer Prize-winning 1993 drama, "Angels in America."

Only recently, he said, did he begin to reflect on the impact that the early years of AIDS had on the creative culture, especially on writers and artists.

"We were a community that was in a certain sense ideal in terms of responding in an organized fashion," Mr. Kushner said. "As soon as it became an issue of poverty, it lost a degree of organizational support, as soon as it became more or less brought under control in certain ways in the U.S.," he said. "You can't sustain rage for decades."

The great hole in the landscape is hard to comprehend even now, years past the time when AIDS was ravaging the American art world unchecked.

"There's a group of gay men about five years older than me who no longer exist, who would still be alive and producing work, who are gone," said Mr. Kushner, 49. "And there are a number of people I know who survived the epidemic but who in a certain sense didn't survive, who entered a permanent state of mourning."

CAMPBELL ROBERTSON

The Pioneer

Twenty-five years ago, Lawrence D. Mass was running an addiction treatment program in Manhattan for Greenwich House, a social services group whose clients included drug abusers and gay men.

Fertile ground, it turned out, for first documenting the disease that would become known as AIDS.

A little-known physician, Dr. Mass wrote what AIDS chroniclers regard as the first article on the emergence of — well, of something unusual and terrible, but exactly what was not clear at the time. The article appeared in The New York Native, a small weekly written for a gay audience, on May 18, 1981, several weeks before the first scholarly journal weighed in.

Dr. Mass, who is gay, went on to become a founder of Gay Men's Health Crisis and to devote much of his life to fighting the disease he had stumbled onto.

In early 1981, Dr. Mass, then 34, had heard fragments of rumors about strange health problems cropping up in Lower Manhattan, especially among gay men. He found Dr. Steve Phillips, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who was following the new mystery. Based on his conversation with Dr. Phillips, Dr. Mass wrote a short article about "rumors that an exotic new disease had hit the gay community."

There was so little anyone knew at first, and so much that people got wrong. But looking back, said Dr. Mass, who still practices medicine in Manhattan, there is one essential truth he believes he had right all along.

"From the start, I said you need to acknowledge our civil rights, you need to recognize our relationships, to have any chance of containing and preventing AIDS," he said. "Shame and fear make it worse."

RICHARD PÉREZ-PEÑA

The Friends

PROVINCETOWN, Mass. — Jay Critchley's recollection of what happened when AIDS first hit this gay-friendly town on the tip of Cape Cod is clear and stark.

"People just disappeared and died," he said. "It was that dramatic, and it was frightening."

It was common to see men with lesions walking in and out of the shops, bookstores and restaurants that line the town's main street, struggling to breathe the salt air, said Mr. Critchley, an artist and massage therapist. Asking someone if he had lost weight was taboo; it meant asking if he was sick. Friends made sure to stay in close contact, because those who fell out of touch were usually dying.

The town's gay residents drew together and cared for the sick. Many went house to house, making sure they were comfortable, safe, well fed. Still, no one understood the provenance of the suffering, and when investigators from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention came to town on a fact-finding mission, many gay men simply assumed that they, too, would get sick and die quickly.

"There was a time when I just waited for it to happen to me," said Tom Sterns, an antique shop owner and 30-year resident. "There wasn't any point in getting tested because they couldn't do anything for you, and I didn't want to face having it."

In the mid-1980's, he finally got tested. The results were negative.

AIDS changed Provincetown itself, for good and bad. In the summer of 1983, many tourists stayed away, fearful of contracting the disease. But gay men in the once carefree community grew cautious about unsafe sex, Mr. Critchley said.

As advances in drug treatment have allowed infected men to lead longer, productive lives, the disease is no longer visible, Mr. Sterns said, and is not in the forefront of every gay man's mind.

But that is leading to more problems, said Mr. Critchley, who sees more men slipping back into careless sexual practices.

With the reduction in fear, the town too has changed. Rising real estate prices and an influx of tourists have chipped away its neighborliness and bohemian flair.

"The town is so dramatically different now than it was 10 years ago," Mr. Critchley said.

Monday, June 05, 2006

Builders Blitz aims for 8 homes in 5 days
Low-income families will get new homes in Roseville, Pontiac, Detroit within a week.

Mark Hicks / The Detroit News

DETROIT -- As part of a national project launched to provide affordable housing for low-income families and combat urban blight, several new homes will be built in Metro Detroit in less than a week.

Today marks the start of the 2006 Builders Blitz -- a five-day collaborative project coordinated by Habitat for Humanity and the Building Industry Association that will build more than 450 homes in more than 150 U.S. cities.

The local effort is spearheaded by the Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan's Charitable & Educational Foundation and the Detroit, Macomb and Oakland chapters of Habitat for Humanity.

They will build eight 1,150-square-foot ranch-style homes in the area.

The homes -- four in Detroit, two in Pontiac and two in Roseville -- will be completed by week's end and dedicated to eight families selected by Habitat for Humanity.

At least 18 local building companies donated workers for the weeklong construction project, and businesses such as Bordine's Nursery in Rochester Hills donated lumber, paint and other supplies.

"It's the building industry saying, 'Hey, let's build for those we help,' " said Jim Babcock, president of the Building Industry Association of Southeastern Michigan.

As part of Habitat guidelines, some of the families will help during the week, said Tim Hudson, development director at Habitat for Humanity Detroit.

The four Detroit homes will be built on Tillman, near a neighborhood where the organization has built 120 houses during the past several years, Hudson said.

With the four homes, "we are transforming the block," he said. "We are fortunate that there are so many in the local community to pitch in and help strengthen the community."

*You can reach Mark Hicks at (313) 222-2300 or **mhicks@detnews.com**.*

Marketing Campaign Wows Mackinac

MIRS, Friday, June 2, 2006

(MACKINAC ISLAND) — Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** gave attendees of the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce Mackinac Leadership Conference a taste of the state's new marketing campaign this morning. What these business professionals saw brought them to their feet with thunderous applause, a reminder of the type of reaction Granholm's oratory skills brought her during her 2002 run for office.

A clearly revved-up governor fired up the crowd by showing off the state's new combined $35.5 million business marketing and tourism campaign featuring actor Jeff **DANIELS**.

"We're going to tell our story, spread the pride," Granholm said. "If we don't tell it, they're not going to come."

The governor told the audience that she loved the upper-hand theme of the advertising (See "Administration: Michigan Gives Biz 'Upper Hand,'" 06/01/06). Roughly 80 percent of the business marketing ads will be played outside the state's borders, with 20 percent being spent in state to help retain existing businesses.

While the two-year $19.5 million business marketing ad campaign pleased the crowd, it was the new two-year $16 million tourism promotion campaign at the end of the session that earned her a standing ovation.

The crowd was shown a three-minute piece of film developed by McCann Erickson as part of their bid for the tourism contract, which is being paid for with 21st Century Jobs Fund money, the upfront $400 million the state received from Wall Street for selling off 15 percent of its future tobacco settlement payments. The state hired Duffey Petrosky & Co. to market out-of-state business owners to come to Michigan.

The ad featured the concept, "find your true north," and began with black-and-white scenes of workers in offices, chain stores and concrete freeways. The film then cut to full-color scenes of Michigan's shorelines and northern woods. The gist of the ad message was the unique vacationing opportunities available in Michigan and if you want to put color back in your life, you'll find "true north" in Michigan.

"We've more than doubled our ad budget to tell our story across the country," Granholm told the clearly pleased crowd. "We have a great story to tell."

The governor did say the "true north" theme was probably going to be changed before the ad series began to run, out of her desire to be sure the ads promote southeast Michigan as well as what Michigan residents perceive as true north (the northern lower peninsula and the upper peninsula). A separate 30-second ad was also played for the crowd with the "true north" theme replaced by the words "pure Michigan."

George **ZIMMERMANN**, vice president of Travel Michigan, said the "true north" series tested well in front of today's audience and at an earlier travel summit. The images, the music and the voice-over created the emotional appeal, he said. Changing the name to "Pure Michigan" isn't going to make any difference in the mind of the viewer.

"Had you replaced 'True North,' with 'Pure Michigan,' it would have had the same effect," he said. The Travel Michigan executive noted that key markets that the Michigan campaign will play, Ontario, Milwaukee, etc., don't perceive Michigan as "true north."

The governor encouraged the attendees to become ambassadors of Michigan and tell the state's stories both on the tourism front and the business-marketing front.

Granholm also kept to her message that trade is good, but she told the audience, it's got to be fair trade. She noted that last year, Korea exported some 700,000 cars into the U.S. market. That same year, Michigan auto producers were allowed to only ship 4,000 cars to Korea.

"Our businesses and workers can play this game with anyone," Granholm said. "Just not with one hand tied behind their backs."

The governor's address also was a renewal of her work in promoting the state's economic development plan, Jobs Today, Jobs Tomorrow.

"The old solutions are not going to work," the governor said. "The 20th Century solutions and thinking aren't going to work for us to succeed in the 21st Century."

In talking about the high-tech manufacturing section of the plan, Granholm mentioned high-tech in reference to the high-tech items that the auto industry is coming up with.

"I don't know how it works," she said. "But I want it made here, don't you?"

The governor also clearly wanted to change the mood of the business community, which polls have suggested is at low ebb.

"Let's stop looking in the rearview mirror. Let's start looking forward," said the governor.

In her remarks, the governor also didn't shy away from urging the business executives to put pressure on the Republican-controlled legislature to pass her revised Merit Scholarship Award, where rather than getting the Merit awards right out of high school, students would get it after their first two years of higher education.

Another new item that came out of today's address was a $6 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to help set up a new Early Childhood Investment Corporation, to put the kind of emphasis on early childhood that the state's Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) now puts on economic development.

In response to the speech, Republican Party Chair Saul **ANUZIS** said Granholm's "Jobs Plan" is nothing more than a repackaged line from the 2002 campaign with fancy graphics in a press release.

"The 'plan' is all style and no substance. Her administration can re-format it, re-brand it, they can do anything to style it up for publicity. But judge the plan by its performance because in the end the facts remain the same. Michigan's economy continues to lag behind the rest of the United States," Anuzis said.

Unger's Son Won't Testify In Murder Trial

Huntington Woods Man Accused Of Killing Wife

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BEULAH, Mich. -- Mark Unger made a last-minute objection Friday to having his 12-year-old son testify in his trial on charges of murdering his wife.

Unger's attorney, Robert Harrison, said Unger asked him not to make his son take the stand in Benzie County Circuit Court. Harrison said Unger was concerned for his son's welfare, the Detroit Free Press reported.

Unger, 45, of Huntington Woods, is charged with first-degree murder in the death of his 37-year-old wife, Florence Unger, at the lakeside Watervale resort in 2003 during an argument over a pending divorce.

He has pleaded not guilty and says his wife's death was accidental.

Prosecutors say Florence Unger was pushed or fell over a boathouse railing, then was dragged, alive but unconscious, into the lake, where she drowned.

The couple's son, Max, was expected to testify about statements he made to police regarding his recollection of his father tucking him and his brother into bed the night of his mother's death.

Max was 10 and his brother, Tyler, was 7 at the time.

Some family members and friends have said Florence Unger had a fear of the dark and would not have stayed outside while her husband checked on their sons at a nearby cottage.

The defense thought it would be helpful for Max to also testify that his mother did not have a fear of the dark, The Detroit News reported.

Prosecutors said Friday that Harrison and Mark Unger made the decision not to call Max as a witness after learning the boy had qualified statements that his mother was not afraid of the dark "when around other people," The Detroit News reported.

Another defense witness, Marci Zussman, testified Friday that in a week she spent at Watervale in 2002, she often found Florence Unger sitting alone on the boathouse deck between 10 and 11 p.m. "looking at the stars."

The trial began April 26.